

# Book Reviews

The Western Journal of Medicine does not review all books sent by publishers, although information about new books received is printed elsewhere in the journal as space permits. Prices quoted are those given by the publishers.

**A PRIMER OF ORTHOPAEDIC BIOMECHANICS**—George Van B. Cochran, MD, MScD, Director, Orthopaedic Engineering and Research Center, Helen Hayes Hospital, West Haverstraw, NY; Professor of Clinical Orthopaedic Surgery, College of Physicians and Surgeons, Columbia University, New York. Churchill Livingstone, Inc., 1560 Broadway, New York, NY 10036, 1982. 413 pages, \$48.00.

The cascade of engineering technology relevant to orthopedics makes this first edition text of Dr Cochran's unusually timely. Medical education including orthopedic resident training is generally deficient in the important subject matter presented. The orderly simplicity with which Dr Cochran has covered the large field of biomechanics makes his book easy reading and understandable. He has overcome the "terminology barrier" and "math anxiety" so frequently encountered by surgeons attempting to understand the fundamental physical information relevant to human stance and movement.

The relatively new field of biomechanical and rehabilitation engineering is attracting students from a wide variety of disciplines including mechanical, electrical, chemical and materials engineering. Currently, orthopedics involves human body interfacing with a great many inert materials. These vary from external prosthetic and orthotic devices to a numerous and sometimes confusing number of implanted products replacing joints, stabilizing fractures and generally improving function, relieving pain and providing cosmesis.

Dr Cochran is highly qualified to write the material presented in this book. It was a delight to read. The book should be included as required reading for orthopedists and engineers involved in biological technology. It is sufficiently basic and informative that its inclusion in required reading for medical students should be considered. Physical therapists, prosthetists, orthotists, occupational therapists, and other allied health personnel involved in rehabilitation of patients with mobility deficits will also find the material informative and challenging.

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**SNAKE VENOM POISONING**—Findlay E. Russell, MD, PhD, Professor of Pharmacology and Toxicology, University of Arizona, Tucson; Adjunct Professor of Neurology, University of Southern California, Los Angeles; and Adjunct Professor of Neuro-pharmacology, Loma Linda University, Loma Linda, California. Scholium International, Inc., 265 Great Neck Rd., Great Neck, NY 11021, 1983. 562 pages, \$57.50.

The author, Dr Findlay Russell, is an internationally recognized authority on animal toxins and human envenomation. His book represents the culmination of a lifetime of work with over 25 years of clinical and research experience in this specialized field. The result is the definitive and up-to-date textbook on venomous snakes and their disastrous encounters with man. Dr Russell writes not only from extensive personal experience but with an intimate knowledge of the world's literature. His library contains every published book concerning biology of snakes, pharmacology and chemistry of their venom, and the effects of their bites, as well as collected reprints from the literature of the world's journals—many in foreign languages. Fortunately for the reader, Dr Russell has evaluated this mass of literature for accuracy and for significance.

The writing in such comprehensive texts often tends to be dull and trite. However, this book may be read for pleasure as well as profit. Dr Russell's book is a delight to peruse, whether

or not one ever encounters a snake-bitten patient. Dr Russell does not hesitate to add the personal touch—he is not afraid to use the pronoun "I" or to boldly state his personal opinion. There are flashes of humor throughout the text. Rarely does one encounter a scholarly book so enjoyable to read.

While the book was written with practicing physicians in mind, it includes the basic knowledge of snake biology essential to better patient care. The subject matter covers the structure and behavior of both North American and exotic foreign snakes (which one may encounter in treating proprietors of "underground zoos"), the composition and pharmacology of venoms, the medical treatment of snakebite (with a caution about the surgical treatment) and myths and folklore that surround these misunderstood reptiles. As an encore, Dr Russell covers the problems of envenomation by the dreaded lizards of the southwest, Gila monsters and beaded lizards.

The publishers have produced a book with large clear type, profusely illustrated with Dr Russell's photographs and line drawings. The cover is certain to catch one's eye on any bookshelf. This book is easy to read even by a weary clinician after a hard day's work.

Only approximately 7,000 snakebites will reach the medical profession each year. Consequently, practitioners often are uncertain about the therapy for this emergency in their panic-stricken patients. Dr Russell's tome, therefore, should be in the library of every hospital that offers emergency services. It should be required reading for all emergency room physicians and is highly recommended for all practitioners in areas in which venomous snakes abound—particularly, the south and southwest. Since snakebites involve many disciplines (immunology, pathology, chemistry and pharmacology), the book should be a welcome and authoritative addition to these libraries. Finally, even a physician practicing in the heart of a large city might enjoy reading this book. Who knows when a physician may be called upon to treat a patient who has just been bitten by a "pet" cobra?

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**CARDIOVASCULAR PATHOLOGY—Volumes I and II**—Edited by Malcolm D. Silver, MD, PhD, FRCPA, FRCP(C), Professor and Chairman, Department of Pathology, Health Sciences Centre, University of Western Ontario Faculty of Medicine, and Chief of Pathology, University Hospital, London, Ontario. Churchill Livingstone, Inc., 1560 Broadway, New York, NY 10036, 1983. 1,407 pages, \$190.00.

This is a two-volume treatise on cardiac pathology edited by M. D. Silver and written by a distinguished international panel of pathologists with special interest in cardiovascular diseases. There are 37 chapters which cover not only the standard subjects but several pathological aspects of present-day cardiac technology (cardiac pacing, coronary bypass grafts). Throughout the text, great weight is given to clinical considerations and clinical-pathological correlations, which makes the book particularly valuable to clinical cardiologists.

Despite the multiplicity of authors, the book is well edited—chapters are clearly written with a minimum of overlap in related subjects. The print and illustrations are excellent and each chapter has a well-edited bibliography.

Certain chapters were of particular interest to this reviewer: "Age-related cardiovascular changes," "Disease of the coronary arteries," "Ischemic diseases of the myocardium," "Postoperative congenital cardiac disease." (The subject of congenital heart disease in general is not included in the book because of the feeling that good texts limited to this subject are available—which is the right decision.)

Some minor defects are noted: The chapter on the conducting system is disappointing—anatomic basis for arrhythmias is treated very briefly. The divisions of the left bundle branch and their diseases are dealt with in a brief paragraph.

In general this is a valuable addition to the libraries not only of pathologists but cardiologists and cardiovascular surgeons as well. Also, it would be a good reference book for students and house staff. It is highly recommended.

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**STERIODS IN ASTHMA: A REAPPRAISAL IN THE LIGHT OF INHALATION THERAPY**—Edited by T. J. H. Clark, Professor of Thoracic Medicine, Guy's Hospital Medical School, London. John Wright/PSG Inc., 545 Great Road, Littleton, MA 01460, 1983. 233 pages, \$42.50.

Most medical monographs carefully cultivate the facade of impartiality and objectivity. T. J. H. Clark, the editor of *Steroids in Asthma* plays no such charade. It is his personal "view [that] the baleful reputation of systemic corticosteroids has cast too long a shadow over the treatment of asthma inappropriately limiting the more widespread use of inhaled corticosteroids." He then selects monograph contributors who are, in essence, given the charge to support this view. The reader is immediately put on notice that this book may not be worthwhile. Next, the reader thumbs through the book which has the elegance that commercial artists impart to drug company advertising (big print, wide margins, multicolor figures, glossy photographs) but which is nearly devoid of standard deviations and contains no measures of statistical significance. Finally, the reader notes that 3 of the 12 contributors are from New Zealand. What do they know about asthma in New Zealand! Should the reader put down the book and move on? No.

The elegant format that makes the monograph suspicious, the panache of style common to English writers and the attention-getting topic headings in the left margins make this monograph a delight to read. More important, the book is worthwhile for its medical content. The editor has fairly warned the reader that this book is a polemic and the contributors provide lively and, for the most part, intelligent support of that polemic. The reader must remain cautious. Conclusions are drawn that may or may not be true. For instance, Compton in Chapter 11 states that pediatricians inexplicably use methylxanthines and implies that inhaled corticosteroids are preferable. I ask Dr Compton, "Where is the long-term study comparing methylxanthines with inhaled steroids?"

*Steroids in Asthma* is a genre of monographs that is all too rare. It is not only a book about medical facts but about medical style. It conveys the experiences, insights, opinions and clinical techniques of the contributors. Topics range from the epidemiology of asthma to a guide on how to correctly use inhalers. (The title of *Steroids in Asthma* is misleading since the monograph concerns a much broader approach to asthma.) The contributors are attuned to providing the reader with information useful in the practical management of asthmatic patients. Although I admonish the reader to be wary of the monograph's sweeping conclusions, the reader will have a better fund of information about asthma and have guidelines on how to interpret and use that information. Incidentally, I now know that New Zealand has a lot to teach me about asthma.

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**ATLAS OF SURGICAL OPERATIONS, Fifth Edition**—Robert M. Zollinger, MD, DSc(Hon), FACS, FRCS(Hon) England and Edinburgh, Emeritus Regents Professor and Chairman of the Department of Surgery, The Ohio State University College of Medicine, and Chief of the Surgical Service, University Hospitals, The Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio; and Robert M. Zollinger, Jr, MD, FACS, Associate Professor of Surgery, Case Western Reserve University School of Medicine and University Hospitals, Cleveland, Ohio. Macmillan Publishing Co., Inc., 866 Third Ave., New York, NY 10022, 1983. 436 pages, \$80.00.

My reaction to a detailed inspection of the Fifth Edition of the *Atlas of Surgical Operations* by Zollinger and Zollinger is the same as my reaction more than 40 years ago when I received a copy of the First Edition of this atlas by Elliott C. Cutler and Robert Zollinger: "How can any surgeon be without it?" Until the new Fifth Edition arrived I still found many occasions to refer to my first edition and later to Volume II published in 1967 for a presurgical review of the technical details of an operation, sometimes of an operation I had performed many times before and in some cases where minor details of my technique differed from those presented by the authors. However, I have always found their clear line drawings and brief pertinent comments to be helpful.

Volume II published in 1967 was designed to present the more complicated procedures and to complement the standard operations presented in Volume I. The Fifth Edition presents a combination of procedures of both categories with various additions and deletions of subjects from previous editions giving a final presentation of 206 chapters or sections.

Selection of procedures to be covered in a general atlas of this type of course is a major task and reflects the interests and the background of the authors. The first plate of the first edition was tonsillectomy, a procedure that has been deleted from later editions despite the fact that it is still one of the most commonly performed operative procedures in this country. The authors probably agree with many surgeons and most pediatricians that the procedure is greatly overused. The section on gynecological procedures is retained and there is an extensive section on vascular surgery.

In the thoracic surgery section the technique of pneumomec-tomy and lobectomy have been omitted but rib resection and thoracotomy incisions, which a general surgeon might use for certain elective and emergency procedures, are appropriately retained.

Considerable space is devoted to radical mastectomy although it is stated that "radical mastectomy is no longer a routine procedure for carcinoma of the breast," and few such operations are being performed in most US hospitals today. Despite the strong public pressure to continue the evaluation of even less extensive excisional procedures than modified radical mastectomy there is no discussion of partial mastectomy.

This addition is an update of a format that has been highly successful for more than 40 years. The general selection of important procedures, the excellent clear artwork and the brief but pertinent text will continue to make this volume essential to the library of every student, practitioner and teacher of surgery.

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**CLINICAL MANAGEMENT OF POISONING AND DRUG OVERDOSE**—Lester M. Haddad, MD, Clinical Assistant Professor, Medical College of Georgia; Director, Savannah Regional EMS Poison Center; Director of Education, Department of Emergency Medicine, Memorial Medical Center, Savannah, Georgia; and James F. Winchester, MD, FRCP, Associate Professor of Medicine, Georgetown University School of Medicine, and Co-Director of Hemodialysis, Hemoperfusion and Transplantation Services, Georgetown University Medical Center, Washington, DC. W B Saunders Company, West Washington Square, Philadelphia, PA 19105, 1983. 1,012 pages, \$75.00.

Haddad and Winchester have collaborated with 84 authors to prepare 107 chapters in a new text of 1,000 pages concerning the management of poisoning and drug overdose. In the past five years there has been an explosion of new data in the field of clinical toxicology. This text is conveniently divided into two parts: the first part deals with a general approach to poisoning and the second concerns specific agents. This division